



## WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

Pope Francis sent out a challenging message for the occasion of the second annual *World Day of the Poor* to be remembered on *Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>*. The full letter is available on the Vatican web site. The following is a short excerpt from Pope Francis' words.

Countless initiatives are undertaken every day by the Christian community in order to offer closeness and a helping hand in the face of the many forms of poverty all around us. Often too, our cooperation with other initiatives inspired not by faith but by human solidarity, make it possible for us to provide help that otherwise we would have been unable to offer. The realization that in the face of so much poverty our capacity for action is limited, weak and insufficient, leads us to reach out to others so that, through cooperation, we can attain our goals more effectively. (Quoted from # 7)

I invite my brother bishops, priests, and especially deacons, who have received the laying on of hands for the service of the poor (cf. Acts 6:1-7), as well as religious and all those lay faithful – men and women ... to experience this *World Day* as a privileged moment of new evangelization. The poor evangelize us and help us each day to discover the beauty of the Gospel. Let us not squander this grace-filled opportunity. On this day, may all of us feel that we are in debt to the poor, because, in hands outstretched to one another, a salvific encounter can take place to strengthen our faith, inspire our charity and enable our hope to advance securely on our path towards the Lord who is to come. (Quoted from # 10)

The message and the challenge from Pope Francis need to enflame us anew to the cries of the poor and the vulnerable. We also are called to widen our understanding of who is 'poor' and banish any prejudice from our hearts and minds. We don't need to look far. The media keeps us informed about crises all over the world even as they happen. Millions of people have fled their homelands because of drought, violence and genocide. **And what is my response?**

Truthfully, I don't need to look very far for the poor, the weak and the vulnerable. They may be in my own home, in my own neighbourhood, or in my town or city. Perhaps the 'poor and 'vulnerable' are within my own heart. **And what is my response?**

Whatever this special *World Day of the Poor* means for you, please let it not only be for a day but let it be an attitude of your heart and life. Can each one of us reach out to one other person? What a difference that would make!

Sr. Teresa Morrison, CPS